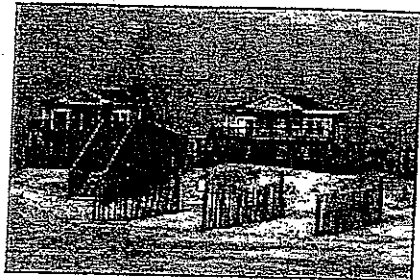


## Facts about new state guidelines for installing sand fences

The N.C. Coastal Resources Commission has enacted new permit guidelines and exemption criteria for the installation of sand fences along the oceanfront. The guidelines took effect Aug. 1.

When properly installed, the fences help build dunes by trapping wind-blown sand. But if installed improperly, they can impede public access to the beach, and can trap or endanger sea turtles, their nests or hatchlings.



Under the new rules, property owners who follow certain criteria will be eligible for an exemption from Coastal Area Management Act permit requirements. If property owners want to put up sand fences that differ from the criteria, they will have to apply for a CAMA minor development permit.

The new guidelines do not apply to sand fences installed prior to Aug. 1, 2002.

### Exemption allowed if fencing meets criteria

The guidelines create a CAMA minor permit and an exemption for sand fencing. To qualify for the exemption, installation of new sand fencing has to meet the following criteria:

- The fencing must be no taller than 5 feet and built from evenly spaced thin wooden vertical slats connected with twisted wire.
- The fencing must be placed as far landward as possible to avoid interference with sea turtle nesting, public access and use of the beach. It must not be placed on the wet-sand beach.

- If fencing is to be placed parallel to the shoreline, it must not be located waterward of the crest of the frontal or primary dune.
- If fencing is to be placed waterward of the crest of the dune, it must be installed at a 45-degree or greater angle to the shoreline. Each section of fence must not be longer than 10 feet, and sections must be spaced at least 7 feet apart.
- Fencing must not extend more than 10 feet beyond either the first line of stable natural vegetation, the toe of the frontal or primary dune, or the erosion escarpment of the dune, whichever is closest to the water.
- Sand fencing to be placed along public accesses may be as long as the access, and may include a 45-degree funnel on the waterward end. The funnel may extend up to 10 feet beyond the end of the access.

### Why the guidelines are needed

In recent years, the amount of sand fencing along the coast has grown significantly as property owners sought to protect their homes from storms and long-term beach erosion. As such, miles of sand fencing – some of which is improperly installed or neglected – now line the state's beaches.

Several beach communities have attempted to address the issue through sand-fencing ordinances, but the scope of the problem requires state attention. The CRC's new regulatory guidelines were developed in cooperation with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

### Learn more about the guidelines

For more information, contact the Coastal Management office nearest you, or go online to [www.nccoastalmanagement.net](http://www.nccoastalmanagement.net).





## ☐ North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission ☐

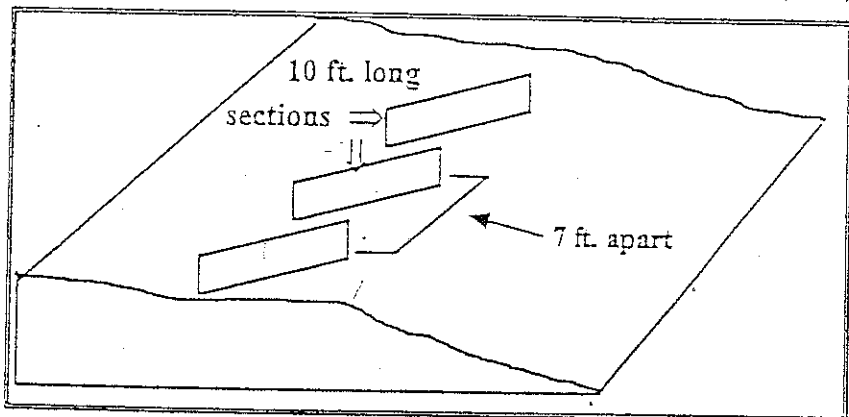
512 N. Salisbury Street, Raleigh, North Carolina 27604-1188, 919-733-3391  
Charles R. Fullwood, Executive Director

### SAND FENCE INSTALLATION ON NORTH CAROLINA BEACHES

Sea turtles nest on nearly all of North Carolina's coastal beaches, laying an average of 600 nests annually. Sea turtles face many natural hazards and are also affected by human activities. Careful planning can eliminate most of the human-caused hazards, such as the placement of sand fencing.

Sand fencing placed on sea turtle nesting beaches may interfere with nesting activity if placed so that it forms a barrier between the mean high water mark and the primary dune where nests are typically deposited. Sand fencing should be designed and installed so that it does not impede nesting attempts and/or trap nesting females and emergent hatchlings. The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission recommends placing individual sections of sand fencing at angles of at least  $45^\circ$  (see drawing) to the shoreline, facing the predominate wind direction. Placement of fencing at angles greater than  $45^\circ$  to the shoreline is more beneficial to sea turtles; and,

cement at  $90^\circ$  is optimal. Individual sections should not exceed 10 feet in length and should be spaced at least 7 feet apart (parallel to each other) to allow sea turtles to turn around between the fencing sections. Sand fencing should be placed as far landward as possible. This method of sand fencing encourages sand accretion and minimizes negative impacts to nesting sea turtles.



There are different types of sand fencing available. Standard fencing consists of evenly spaced wooden slats wired together and supported by wooden posts. Woven fabric fence material is also available and may be used, provided that the fabric sustains a 40% - 60% open space to closed space ratio to avoid wind damage by allowing air to flow through the material. Remember that fabric-type fences are susceptible to ultraviolet degradation and may sag and lose its original shape, thus reducing performance.

In order to maximize the benefits of sand fencing, routine maintenance and adjustments are necessary. Once sand fencing becomes buried, the benefits are no longer realized. Therefore, fencing should be repositioned before it becomes 50% buried, to maximize sand build up. Sand fencing should not be left buried in newly-formed sand dunes, and all non-functioning or derelict fencing should be removed from the beach immediately.

*Installation and repositioning of sand fencing should be conducted outside the sea turtle nesting season (30 September through 31 April). Call the Sea Turtle Project Coordinator, Division of Wildlife Management, (919) 729-1359, for additional technical guidance on sea turtle conservation.*

(Corrected format)

**15A NCAC 07K .0212  
FENCING**

**INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE OF SAND**

Sand fences that are installed and maintained subject to the following criteria are exempt from the permit requirements of the Coastal Area Management Act:

- (1) Sand fencing may only be installed for the purpose of: building sand dunes by trapping wind blown sand; the protection of the dune(s) and vegetation (planted or existing).
- (2) Sand fencing shall not impede existing public access to the beach, recreational use of the beach or emergency vehicle access. Sand fencing shall not be installed in a manner that impedes or restricts established common law and statutory rights of public access and use of public trust lands and waters.
- (3) Sand fencing shall not be installed in a manner that impedes, traps or otherwise endangers sea turtles, sea turtle nests or sea turtle hatchlings.
- (4) Non-functioning, damaged, or unsecured, sand fencing shall be immediately removed by the property owner.
- (5) Sand fencing shall be constructed from evenly spaced thin wooden vertical slats connected with twisted wire, no more than 5 feet in height. Wooden posts or stakes no larger than 2" X 4" or 3" diameter shall support sand fencing.
- (6) Location. Sand fencing shall be placed as far landward as possible to avoid interference with sea turtle nesting, existing public access, recreational use of the beach, and emergency vehicle access.
  - (i) Sand fencing shall not be placed on the wet sand beach area.
  - (ii) Sand fencing installed parallel to the shoreline shall be located no farther waterward than the crest of the frontal or primary dune; or
  - (iii) Sand fencing installed waterward of the crest of the frontal or primary dune shall be installed at an angle no less than 45 degrees to the shoreline. Individual sections of sand fence shall not exceed more than 10 feet in length (except for public accessways) and shall be spaced no less than seven feet apart, and shall not extend more than 10 feet waterward of the following locations, whichever is most waterward, as defined in 15A NCAC 7H .0305: the first line of stable natural vegetation, the toe of the frontal or primary dune, or erosion escarpment of frontal or primary dune; and
  - (iv) Sand fencing along public accessways may equal the length of the accessway, and may include a 45 degree funnel on the waterward end. The waterward location of the funnel shall not exceed 10 feet of the locations identified in Item (6) (iii) of this Rule.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 113A-103(5)c.;*  
*Eff. August 1, 2002.*